

CHAPTER 5

CAPITAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

BACKGROUND

One of the by-products of growth and development is the need for capital facility improvements. In an ideal setting, non-residential development tax revenues combined with residential property taxes would completely offset capital facility costs associated with new residential development. In Loudoun, and in similarly situated, rapidly growing localities on the fringe of metropolitan areas, residential development generally precedes non-residential development by several years. Generally, residential development does not pay for itself; in other words, property taxes and other revenues generated by new residential development does not cover the cost of providing services to new residents. Few fringe communities ever achieve a jobs/housing balance that results in excess revenues for funding capital improvement projects.

Funding capital facilities improvements will be a challenge to the County, particularly if residential development continues at a pace that far outstrips non-residential development. This situation is compounded by falling commercial and non-residential property values and by the expectations of the County's newest residents. Many of Loudoun's new residents are relocating from more urban or suburbanized communities which offer access to a greater variety of programs and facilities.

In the Toll Road planning area, the County seeks a mix of residential and non-residential development as the first step toward addressing capital facility needs. Ensuring that facilities and services will be available in new residential and non-residential developments is another important step. Obviously, residential and non-residential development generate different capital facility needs. Typical suburban residential development usually generates the need for additional facilities such as schools, libraries, and parks if existing facilities are not available or do not have growth capacity. Non-residential development generally creates little demand for community services. Therefore, it is likely that additional residential development in the Toll Road planning area, particularly west of Route 659 where little development has taken place, will increase demands for a variety of capital facilities. Existing facilities in Leesburg and east of Route 659 and proffered facilities in Dulles North will assist in offsetting some of these demands.

Supporting new development with all the necessary public facilities and utilities can be costly. The current and projected operational funding capabilities of Loudoun County, as well as the Virginia Department of Transportation and other public agencies are, and will be, insufficient to provide new development with all the public facilities and utilities needed to support growth. Unfortunately, major delays in the provision of facilities and services would seriously hamper the marketing, sales and revenue projections of the development community. Consequently, the County anticipates that the development community will continue to cooperate with the public sector in the provision of public facilities and utilities which will be necessary to adequately serve the growth anticipated in the Toll Road planning area and other growth areas in the County.

Over the past several years, the development community has assisted in offsetting the costs of growth primarily through development proffers, although other mechanisms are also being explored. The majority of existing proffers in the Toll Road planning area are for properties east of Route 659, where a variety of residential and non-residential rezonings have occurred over the last several years. In general, proffers associated with non-residential rezonings have focused primarily on transportation improvements. Residential rezoning proffers generally include a wide variety of capital facilities and community facility commitments as well as transportation improvements. The County has accepted both cash proffers and donations of land or built facilities through proffer agreements. The County anticipates that the development community will continue to assist in providing public facilities and services through proffers, by using the proffer guidelines outlined in the County's General Plan and other innovative funding techniques such as special taxing districts.

The County seldom receives lump sum contributions up front, prior to construction. As the economy has contracted, more developers are phasing proffers or seeking to amend proffer agreements to add or modify phasing. The County provides flexibility to developers to continue phasing proffers to make the costs of development more affordable (to the County and the developer, builder, and homeowner) and ensure that facilities are not constructed before they are needed in the Toll Road planning area.

POLICIES

1. In accordance with General Plan policies, the County anticipates that the provision of public facilities and services in the Toll Road planning area will be a joint effort between the public and private sectors through a combination of conventional funding sources, such as state and local tax revenues and innovative funding mechanisms such as proffers, special taxing districts, and user fees.
2. The County anticipates that all residential and non-residential communities in the Toll Road planning area will contribute a fair share toward providing a full complement of appropriate public facilities and services such as adequate roads and utilities, recreational, educational, cultural and human services facilities, open space, and stormwater management facilities. To this end, the County anticipates that each request for residential and non-residential rezoning in the Toll Road planning area will include proposals to assist in offsetting the capital facilities and service needs generated by the new development.
3. Capital facilities proffers in the Toll Road planning area shall be evaluated in accordance with the General Plan capital facilities proffer guidelines.
4. Specific facility needs in the Toll Road planning area will be based on the County's adopted service plans, capital improvement program, existing proffers and specific land development proposals. (See appendix) Transit facilities and the preservation of Goose Creek as an environmental resource are priorities for establishing a Capital Improvement Plan for the area and for evaluating development proposals.
5. The County will encourage that essential public facilities and services such as adequate road access, utilities, fire and rescue facilities, and police protection be

provided in the early phases of a development. Other services and facilities should be phased in accordance with projected construction or development thresholds.

6. Existing proffer agreements that apply to properties in the Toll Road planning area may be amended by request of the landowner provided that such revisions further the goals and policies of this plan.
7. The County will continue to support volunteer fire and rescue service in the Toll Road planning area. Fire and rescue service and facilities will continue to be financed through a variety of mechanisms including private donations, fund raising efforts, and development proffers.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

A variety of recreational amenities have been proffered as part of residential rezonings in the Toll Road planning area, particularly east of Route 659, in the Dulles North area. In addition to the facilities and contributions that have been proffered to the County for public use, a number of recreational facilities have been proffered for the use of community residents. These facilities include neighborhood pools, tennis courts, tot lots, pedestrian trail systems, and multi-purpose courts and fields. These facilities will be maintained and operated by Homeowners Associations (HOA) and will not generally be available for public use. None of the non-residential developments in the Toll Road planning area have proffered park or recreational amenities. Local businesses and corporations often sponsor local little league teams or sponsor their own corporate teams that participate in the County's program through league play.

The County's Parks and Recreation Service Plan establishes four parks and recreation service districts in the County. The Toll Road planning area is located in the central district. It is the County's intent to provide regional, rather than neighborhood or community, recreational services from four central park locations. This approach creates economies of scale and efficiencies in the County's ability to provide service. A regional park site for the central planning area has not been identified, however; the Banshee Reeks property, owned by the County, is a possible site. The Service Plan also anticipates that local recreational needs will be met through neighborhood or community (HOA or other private group) facilities and amenities that are located within residential communities.

As new development occurs in the Toll Road planning area, especially west of Route 659, additional demands on park and recreation services will be created. Some of this demand can be met by publicly owned facilities that have been proffered in the planning area or through regional facilities outside the planning area such as Claude Moore Park, Ida Lee Park, or the Cascades Sportsplex. If current trends continue, large residential communities will probably continue to provide neighborhood or community facilities such as tot lots, pools, tennis courts and other features as community amenities. Smaller developments or high density compact communities would most likely rely on publicly owned or operated regional facilities. Therefore, rather than building facilities on-site, these types of developments might contribute cash contributions toward regional improvements.

POLICIES

1. The County will support a variety of public and private recreational opportunities and amenities in the Toll Road planning area.
2. The County will encourage that residential communities be designed to include appropriate neighborhood oriented recreational amenities such as tot lots, swimming pools, tennis courts, pedestrian trails and sidewalks, small parks etc. These facilities would be typically owned, maintained and operated by Homeowners' Associations.
3. As recommended in the Parks and Recreation Service Plan, the provision of regional, County owned and operated recreational facilities such as large County parks, including ballfields, olympic sized swimming pools and other facilities, will be a joint effort between the County and the development community. The County anticipates that these facilities would be funded through a variety of sources including bonds, tax revenues, user fees and proffers.
4. The County will encourage that non-residential developments include picnic areas, trails, open space and other recreational amenities.